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ABSTRACT

In 2000, a survey of 148 local government officials in West Virginia sought information in eight areas of local issues, including community needs. This paper focuses on responses of about 11 categories of community needs and compares them to findings from a similar study conducted in 1996. The categories are governmental administration, financial management, public finance, economic development, planning and land use, infrastructure and environmental management, transportation, housing, public health and social services, public safety, and education. Responses were analyzed for the state overall and for the 10 regional planning and development councils. Findings indicate that economic development, particularly recruitment of new manufacturing industry, continued to be the top concern among West Virginia local officials. Education and housing issues remained important overall issues, but public health and social services issues and planning and land use issues gained in importance. Meanwhile, public finance, infrastructure, and environmental management matters became less of a concern. Domestic violence became a more important issue, but the average score remained the same. Appendices present statewide responses by category, overall rankings of all issues examined, and a list of top 10 concerns by planning and development council region. (TD)

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A Comparison of Local Concerns in West Virginia Communities: 1996 and 2000

by

Jennifer Teagarden

RESEARCH PAPER 2016

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Abstract: Having knowledge about the local needs of West Virginia communities and understanding those localities' specific needs change over time enables local and state government leaders as well as other agencies to focus on pressing issues throughout the state to foster growth and promote development. A survey consisting of eight different parts designed to gain knowledge about localities technological advancement, training needs, and specific local concerns ranging from governmental administration to education was distributed to 694 local government leaders in 2000. Responses to the surveys were compared to responses received from a similar survey distributed in 1996 to help assess the change in local concerns over a four-year time span.

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Introduction

West Virginia communities encompass a diverse range of places, from urbanized cities to mountainous, rural towns. Each community determines its own local needs, depending on its location and the resources available. Additionally these needs can change over time. Local governments have knowledge about what services their communities demand. They attempt to stimulate growth, foster development, and meet the needs of their citizens. Localities must continually reassess their needs to evaluate the effectiveness of or need for improvements. Understanding that a community's specific needs differ over time, and knowing which needs change, enables local government officials to achieve goals and promote growth in their communities. Recording and comparing changes in these communities will help address these needs and ensure improvements.

Statewide, local communities seek economic development. However, many local needs differ from county to county and region to region, ranging from problems of dilapidated housing to inadequate health insurance. Understanding the needs of local governments allows for improvements within communities. Determining these local needs provides a complete overview for local officials. By reviewing local government needs and comparing them with previously stated needs, local and state governments can ensure that communities in West Virginia grow and prosper.

Background Literature

An examination of needs paints a clear picture of the direction a community takes. Local government plays a vital role in a community's growth. Many problems affecting improvements within a community exist at local levels. Obtaining funds for a

community's various needs remains difficult. For example, state government imposes severe fiscal restraints on counties, making creativity difficult in solving the needs of local communities (Brisbin et al., 1996). Local governments rely heavily on state funding assistance. They work with limited resources and must make best use of each one. They must maintain existing programs and continue searching for ways to promote improvements within the community. Counties and municipalities must have balanced working budgets, which have little to no room for disasters. They may not assess local income tax or sales tax but may collect business and occupation taxes. These taxes accounted for 40 percent of revenue throughout the counties in 1996 (Brisbin et. al, 1996).

Brisbin et al. (1996) also reported that nearly all county expenses in counties having fewer than 10,000 residents went toward salaries, supplies, and office expenses for elected officials and the maintenance of the courthouse and jail. In counties with 10,000 to 50,000 residents, 75 percent of expenses went toward elected officials. However, in counties exceeding 50,000 residents, expenditures fell across a much broader range. Local officials must maintain an awareness of such expenses when attempting to meet the needs of their citizens.

Local government officials must develop cost-effective programs. By evaluating program effectiveness through changing needs, officials can ensure proper use of funds. Assessing local level needs is important because of community and regional differences throughout the state. One locality's needs may differ from that of a community in another part of the state.

A comparison of local needs in the past and present is essential in maintenance of quality of living. Local governments must ensure that their community will continue to grow, prosper, and offer the best resources available. A locality's economic conditions, infrastructure, and social conditions all impact quality of life. By evaluating localities' needs, and the changes that occur in them, we can better understand the direction each community must take to reach or maintain high quality of living.

Recently, communities neighboring Jefferson County have been concerned with property taxes on undeveloped land. Across the state in Kanawha County, local communities continue to push for better emergency systems such as 911 (*Charleston Gazette*, 1999). The diversity of concerns and needs of West Virginia's communities remains as diverse as the state's landscape. Local and state government officials must understand the changing needs of their communities. They face a wide range of challenges in their effort to adequately provide services, promote development, and meet the needs of their citizens.

Little published, up-to-date information exists about the needs of local West Virginia communities. Prior to a 1997 study, the most recent information about local community needs in West Virginia dated back to the 1970s. Relying on information from a quarter century ago will not help a community improve today. Local government officials must have current data to allow for development throughout the state.

Dougherty and Plein (1997) conducted a survey of 1,803 local officials in 1996. They asked officials to rank 164 items independently based on importance of each item within their community. The study reported that economic development issues topped the list of local government concerns in 1996. Recruitment and retention of

manufacturing industry and retail business ranked as the most important objectives for many public officials. They desired bringing in high paying, stable jobs to increase quality of life. These jobs also promote growth within the community. Mere survival of a locality often requires the recruitment of new manufacturing and retail businesses. Reassessing the needs of these communities will show if local governments have taken steps to meet these needs.

Other important issues reported in the study included social conditions, environment and infrastructure, and governance issues (Dougherty and Plein, 1997). These issues varied regionally. Notable variations occurred within Planning and Development Council Regions. While most regions emphasized economic development needs such as recruitment of new retail business and manufacturing industries, one region's main concern was abandoned and dilapidated housing while another region's highest concern was juvenile delinquency. Variations occurred throughout these regions, illustrating the diversity of regional concerns.

Surveying local government officials is essential to assessing the current needs of local communities. Comparing previously stated locality needs with current ones will show if improvements occurred. If West Virginia communities wish to continue developing, they must reexamine local needs to push local and state governments toward improvements in their localities.

Methodology

Understanding and evaluating needs of local communities requires each locality's cooperation. This research examines needs on a regional as well as community level in West Virginia. It strives to reassess local needs in West Virginia communities, compare

these current needs with previously measured needs, and compare the measured needs at the regional level.

Information on local needs was obtained through a modified version of the survey distributed to local government officials by Dougherty and Plein (1997). Local government officials know the needs of their communities, and will best evaluate these local needs. By surveying various officials, researchers will draw a more complete picture of local needs.

A total of 694 surveys were distributed. Every mayor of a city or a town in West Virginia received a survey. City and town managers and administrators, county commissioners, county administrators, county executive directors, and a sampling of city council members also received a survey. City council members for Class I, II, and III cities (municipalities with populations greater than 2,000) were selected at random from the 1999-2000 Municipal Directory. The number of city council members that represented each locality varied between 50 and 60 percent, dependant on the number of city council members in each locality. In localities smaller than 2,000 people, designated as towns, no council member received a survey. This sampling frame is a modification of the 1996 sampling frame in which included all members of city council, the mayor, town manager, sheriff, county commissioners and directors of the 11 Regional Planning and Development Councils (PDC).

The survey consisted of eight parts designed to gain information about and measure local needs of a community. Parts One consisted of eleven general questions about the official and his/her locality. Part Two asked about information technology use for operational purposes in the locality's government offices through five multi-step

questions. These sections are designed to gain information about a locality and it's technological advancement.

Part three had 11 multi-step questions pertaining to training preferences of the individual government official, including different types of training styles (i.e., classroom interaction or internet learning) and times of the year that work best or should be avoided for training sessions. Part Four discussed specific training needs. Seven main topics were addressed in which local government officials were asked to rate the need of each training need on a Likert scale of 1-3, ranging from great need (1) to no need (3). Officials were also asked if they or other officials from their locality would be willing to participate in each specific training session. These sections are designed to gain information about training needs around the state. The responses to these sections will enable professionals to provide specific training needs that will allow the community's government to run more smoothly.

Part Five addressed the local needs of the community. The survey questions address 11 main topics:

1) Governmental Administration
2) Financial Management
3) Public Finance
4) Economic Development
5) Planning and Land Use
6) Infrastructure and Environmental Management
7) Transportation
8) Housing
9) Public Health and Social Services
10) Public Safety
11) Education

Each main topic broke down into a total of 145 sub-topics, ranging from five to twenty-four items per section. Public officials ranked each item on a Likert scale of 0 to

4. Ranking an issue "0" indicates a non-pressing issue for the community, while a rank of "4" indicates a highly pressing issue.

Part Six asked officials if their community had accomplished any community strategic visioning about where the community wanted to be in the next three to five years. Part Seven was an open-ended question asking officials to share any success stories involving resolving any of the issues discussed in the survey. Part Eight asked for any other remarks, issues, or concerns not covered in the survey. This survey wanted to understand all local needs, not just the ones raised in the survey. By asking for strategic visioning, success stories, and other comments, researchers can be sure that each local official's opinion on all issues pertaining to their locality are addressed. Surveys were mailed on March 31, 2000. Data coding and tabulation began upon receipt of the surveys and a second mailing occurred on April 28, 2000. The data received from the surveys was entered into a database designed by researchers according to individual local officials' responses. Data was examined two ways: overall statewide individual responses and by the PDC region of the respondent.

The focus of this research report is the responses to Part Five of the survey. The following data analysis methods are applied to this section of the survey. To determine importance of each issue statewide, the average of all responses was calculated. Items that did not receive a ranking were not counted in the overall average of responses. Individual items were then ranked according to the mean response. Means were calculated. Where multiple items are found with the same response mean, the items are listed according to their placement in the survey. The overall mean of each item was

compared to the mean of the corresponding item found in 1996 to assess any significant changes.

The data was divided into the 11 subject categories within the survey to assess the statewide response to each category. Understanding which types are receiving the highest level of concern will help local officials and other professionals focus on specific categories and the items within those categories. The average of each section was found in the same manner as the statewide data.

Additionally the compiled data was split into the 10 regions for analysis, using the existing PDC regions:

1) New River Valley (PDC 1)
2) Western Valley (PDC 2)
3) Capital Valley (PDC 3)
4) Greenbrier Region (PDC 4)
5) Ohio Valley (PDC 5)
6) North Central (PDC 6)
7) Central Highlands (PDC 7)
8) Potomac Highlands (PDC 8)
9) Eastern Panhandle (PDC 9)
10) Northern Panhandle (PDCs 10 and 11)

The average for each region was calculated in the same manner as the statewide data. The top ten issues in each region found through these means were compared to those found in 1996 to assess any large-scale changes within each region.

Predictions

The state of West Virginia is one of the last states to diversify economically. Its years of dependency on coal mining and logging have denied West Virginia the chance to achieve economic development to the standards of most of the United States. With current trends in economic development across the United States, it is predicted that economic development concerns will continue to comprise the highest percentage of the

top ten concerns of local government officials. Because most of West Virginia is comprised of towns and unincorporated places, annexation and planning and land use are also predicted to have high mean scores. West Virginia has an adequate social services department and those issues are not predicted to rank above moderately pressing, nor are public safety or transportation issues. West Virginia, although relatively poor and economically underdeveloped, has a sufficient infrastructure. Finally, with the current rise in school violence and the push for all American children to be safe in and out of school, education and public safety concerns are predicted to rank higher in 2000 than they were in 1996.

Results

The initial mailing had a 21.3 percent response rate (148 responses), as of May 1, 2000. It is hoped that more officials will be reminded to fill out the survey by the second mailing so a more complete picture of West Virginia local needs can be drawn.

The results of this study found that recruitment of new manufacturing industry continues to be the top concern among West Virginia local officials, having an average response of 3.11. This differed only slightly from the average response in 1996 of 3.15. Overall, economic development concerns continued to hold the highest concern among local officials. Education and housing issues remained important overall issues, but public health and social services issues and planning and land use issues became more important. Meanwhile, public finance and infrastructure and environmental management matters became less of a concern (see Appendix A for overall statewide responses by category).

The top four concerns, recruitment of new manufacturing industry (3.11), funding sources for development (2.99), recruitment of new retail business (2.94), and retaining and expanding existing businesses (2.94) remained the same as the results in 1996. Funding sources for development became a slightly higher concern than recruitment of new retail business as found in 1996, but all of the concerns received a slightly lower score than in the previous study. Abandoned and dilapidated housing (2.72) moved up in the ranking to fifth, but it too received a slightly lower average response than in 1996 (2.74).

The five issues completing the top 10 in 2000 differed from the results found by Dougherty and Plein (1997) though:

- recreational opportunities (2.61),
- local government's role in economic development (2.60),
- industrial park development (2.58),
- lack of ability to pay for insurance coverage (2.57), and
- funds for extracurricular activities (2.56).

Meanwhile, three issues fell from the top 10 in 1996, but still remained within the top 20 concerns in 2000:

- lack of parental involvement in education (12^{th}),
- adequate sewer systems (13^{th}), and
- workforce preparation (15^{th})

Domestic violence became a more important issue, but the average score remained the same (2.47). This may be due to the increase awareness of domestic violence by law enforcement agencies and policy makers statewide as well as a decrease in the emphasis placed on other issues by decision-makers.

Nine issues fell from the top 20 concerns of local officials in 2000:

- need for greater flexibility from the state (down to 31^{st} – previously ranked 10^{th}),

- revenues adequate for expenditure levels needed (down to 47th – previously ranked 8th),
- federal government intergovernmental grant revenues,
- street maintenance,
- student drug use,
- juvenile delinquency,
- sidewalk maintenance,
- repeat criminal offenders, and
- treatment for alcohol and drug abuse.

These issues may have become less important due to the focusing of localities on infrastructure and public safety concerns identified in the 1996 survey.

Conversely, issues becoming more important to West Virginia officials included:

- investment in upgrading property,
- technological resources for students,
- main street or downtown revitalization, and
- dealing with lack of growth.

The rise of these concerns emphasizes the turning focus of local government officials to more economic development and education (see Appendix B for a complete list of overall ranking of all issues examined).

The most notable differences in local concerns occurred at the regional level. In every region, new issues became the most important to local officials in that region (see Appendix C for a complete list of top ten issues by PDC Regions). Recruitment of new retail businesses, recruitment of new manufacturing industry, funding sources for development, and juvenile delinquency gave way in some places to a lack of ability to pay for insurance coverage, industrial park development, abandoned and dilapidated housing, retaining and expanding existing businesses, adequate sewer systems, adequacy of the tax base, greater flexibility from the state, and health insurance. However, economic development issues remained high, comprising up to 70 percent of the top 10 concerns at the PDC region level.

Discussion

The most important issues to local public officials are those dealing with economic development. Local government officials desire bringing in high-paying, stable manufacturing and retail jobs to their communities. The recruitment of industry and retail allows for jobs for the citizens and potential for other businesses to be created to service these industries, thus creating more jobs. By bringing in these services, local governments can increase services provided to the community through the increase revenue base.

One of the most important needs to help recruit new manufacturing industry and retail businesses is money to help pay for the effort. The need for funding sources for development is great throughout West Virginia. It is important for state officials to recognize the need for funding to allow improvements throughout the state. Local governments also need to search for ways to obtain these monies (i.e., through private companies, federal agencies, and grants and loans).

Local communities need to look beyond recruitment for a rise in economic development. Retaining and expanding existing businesses is an important way to continue economic growth. Keeping existing businesses is less costly than attracting new businesses. Communities should focus on keeping businesses in their communities and allowing these businesses to grow to create more jobs and a larger revenue base.

Overall, 60 percent of the top 10 issues facing West Virginia local government leaders involved economic development. It is the most important concern for the survival of the state. Yet the issues that were top concerns in 1996 remained top concerns in 2000. The growth and development of West Virginia depends on economic

development. Local government leaders need to focus their attention and funds on bringing in new industry and retail businesses and expanding existing businesses if West Virginia wishes to reach development levels comparable to the rest of the United States.

Not only does West Virginia need to continue to focus on economic development, but local government officials rank education issues as important concerns for the state as well. Local officials recognize that graduates from high school and college are leaving the state at high rates. Children are not being adequately prepared for college and the workforce. Parents are not getting involved in their children's education. Resources are not available to kids in school or after school. These individual issues have become more of a concern in the last four years. Local communities need to focus some of their attention on the future of the state – the students. By recognizing that education is an issue in the communities, local government officials have taken the first important step toward increasing educational involvement and preparation. However, education has remained the second highest priority in the state over four years. The local leaders need to look within their own community to help provide for the students.

Local communities have also made improvements over four years. Infrastructure and environmental management issues are not as pressing of issues. This indicates some growth and/or renewal within communities. By beginning at the base level of the community and focusing on issues such as street maintenance, recycling issues, water and air pollution, and space needs, communities have begun the process of growth and development. Accomplishing these local level needs allows local government officials to focus on the greater perspective -- economic development. It also attracts businesses and industry to the community.

Although statewide economic concerns continued to be the top concern, different areas of the state have already begun to address these needs. This can be seen in the drop of economic development concerns in most of the PDC Regions. In New River Valley Region (PDC 1), the lack of ability to pay for insurance coverage is the highest concern. This issue was not among the top ten concerns in this region in 1996. The lack of provided insurance coverage also became a concern for local officials in this region. In the Western Valley Region (PDC 2), economic development concerns rank above concerns of education in 1996. No educational concerns are among the top ten concerns of local officials in this region.

In the Capital Valley Region (PDC 3), housing issues take top priority, as compared to public safety issues in 1996. Communities in this region have addressed public safety issues so that none appear among the top ten concerns. The Greenbrier Region (PDC 4) continues to focus on economic development, but also emphasize neighborhood revitalization and community centers. Tourism and development issues ranked high in 1996 have given way to revitalization efforts to help promote tourism.

The Ohio Valley Region (PDC 5) focuses on infrastructure issues more than any other region, something that was also seen in 1996. Street maintenance issues and recycling concerns are only slightly overshadowed by economic development concerns. Domestic violence also ranks among the top concerns of local officials. Only in this region and the Eastern and Northern Panhandles is domestic violence seen as such an important issue.

North Central West Virginia (PDC 6) continues to be concerned with housing and neighborhood issues. Abandoned and dilapidated housing still ranks as a major concern

in this region, along with main street, downtown, and neighborhood revitalization. The Central Highlands Region (PDC 7) still ranks economic development matters as its top concerns. However, concerns over adequate sewer systems topped the list in this region. This region is also concerned with adequate waste water facilities, which ranked 40th overall.

The Potomac Highlands Region (PDC 8) continues to express concerns over family and education, with the need for day care facilities ranking seventh and school consolidation issues ranking 10th. The Eastern Panhandle's (PDC 9) concerns remain focused on the prevention of crimes, with domestic violence continuing to receive the same level of concern as in 1996. In the Northern Panhandle (PDCs 10 and 11) economic development concerns continue to rank as the top concerns in the region. However, health insurance needs is the top concern; this issue did not surface as a concern in the region in 1996.

Overall, the state of West Virginia needs to focus on economic development for any hope of growth and development. Individual regions and communities have distinct concerns that need to be addressed for the advancement of the communities. West Virginia officials must recognize the needs of each local community, separate regions, and overall statewide needs to understand what the state needs to develop.

Conclusion

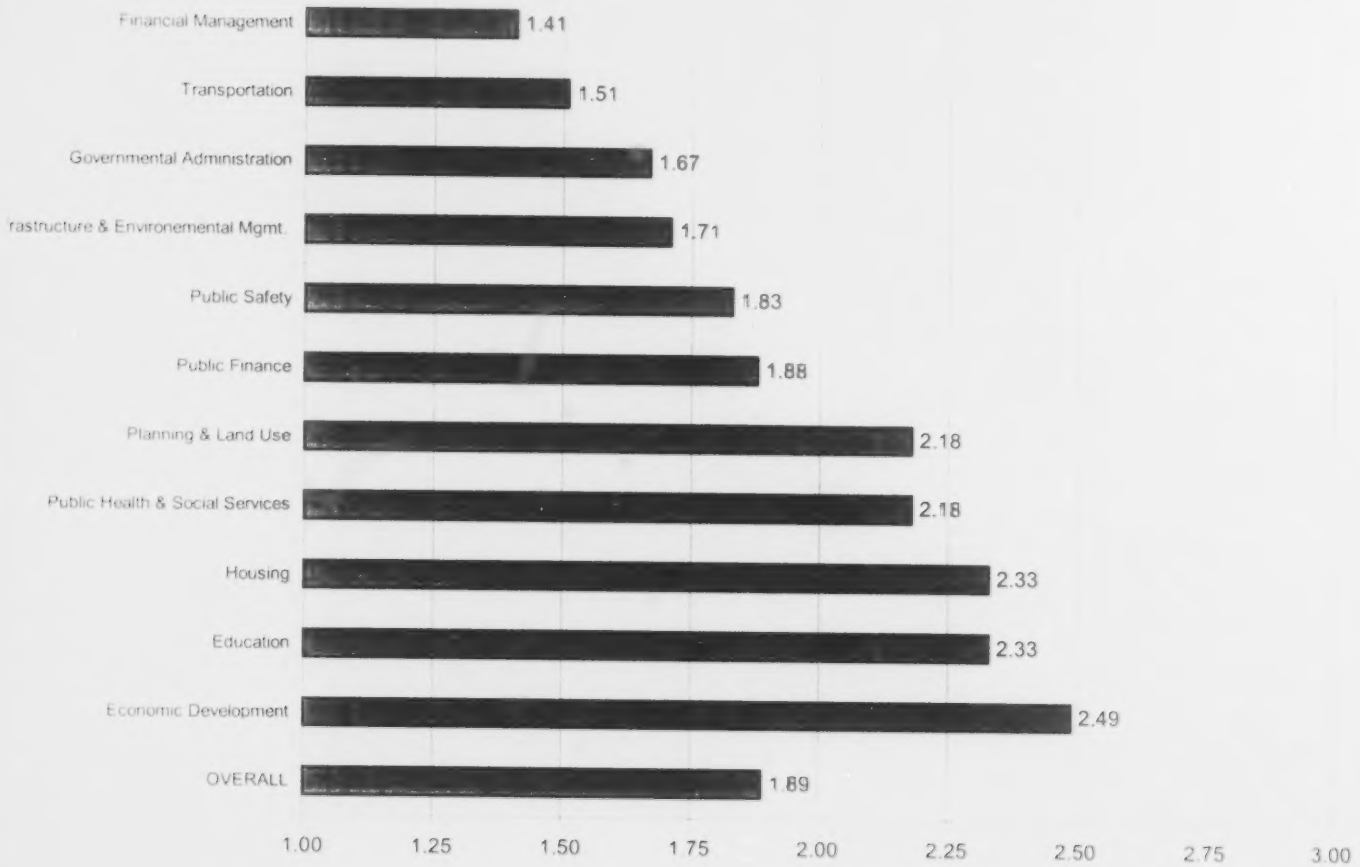
Improving a community requires understanding its needs. Due to lack of current information on the needs of West Virginia communities, localities may find it hard to improve. Often large level needs (such as state needs) overshadow local needs or local officials discuss needs internally. Local government officials need to constantly review

their locality's needs and make other communities, the state government, and other agencies aware of these needs in order to promote growth. Through this research, local officials reexamine their needs.

This research finds that economic development continues to top the list of concerns of local government leaders. The need for recruitment of new manufacturing industry is the most important concern in West Virginia. Understanding that this is the most important issue will help local government leaders, as well as state officials and outside agencies, focus their attention toward a solution to the problem. If West Virginia wants to continue to grow and develop, economic development needs must be met to ensure success.

This research sets a baseline for constant reassessment to occur where evaluation of local needs can continue and comparison to previous needs can follow. Further research results can be compiled and placed with the results of this study and the previous study (Dougherty and Plein, 1997) as a reference manual for local officials to measure the growth and development of their communities.

Statewide Responses by Category



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Overall Rankings of All Issues Examined

Rank	Issue (ranked on a 0-to-4 scale)	Mean
1	Recruitment of new manufacturing industry	3.11
2	Funding sources for development	2.99
3	Recruitment of new retail business	2.94
4	Retaining and expanding existing businesses	2.94
5	Abandoned/dilapidated housing	2.72
6	Recreational opportunities	2.61
7	Local government's role in economic development	2.60
8	Industrial park development	2.58
9	Lack of ability to pay for insurance coverage	2.57
10	Funds for extracurricular activities	2.56
11	Neighborhood community centers	2.51
12	Lack of parental involvement in education	2.50
13	Adequate sewer system	2.47
14	Domestic violence	2.47
15	Workforce preparation in education	2.46
16	Investment in upgrading property	2.45
17	College preparation in education	2.42
18	Technological resources for students	2.41
19	Main street or downtown revitalization	2.40
20	Dealing with lack of growth	2.40
21	Teen programs (e.g., advocacy/after school programs)	2.40
22	Board of education and community relations	2.39
23	Need for change in state law to help development cost	2.38
24	Lack of provided insurance coverage	2.38
25	Student drug use	2.38
26	Annexation-related issues	2.36
27	Illegal dumping	2.32
28	Renovation of existing housing	2.32
29	Health insurance (governmental administration)	2.31
30	Adequacy of tax base	2.31
31	Greater flexibility from the state	2.29
32	Tourism development	2.29
33	Animal control	2.29
34	Student drop outs	2.28
35	Lack of flexibility/opinion in raising local services revenue	2.27
36	School consolidation	2.27
37	Absentee landlords	2.26
38	Revenue diversity	2.25
39	Neighborhood revitalization	2.25
40	Adequate waste water treatment facilities	2.24
41	Parks and recreation facilities	2.24
42	Repeat offenders	2.23
43	Sidewalk maintenance	2.20
44	Planning (land use)	2.19
45	Funds for operating low income housing	2.19
46	Juvenile delinquency	2.19

Rank	Issue (ranked on a 0-to-4 scale)	Mean
47	Revenues adequate for expenditure level needed	2.17
48	Utilities for industry	2.16
49	Federal intergovernmental grant revenues	2.15
50	Recycling issues	2.14
51	State intergovernmental grant issues	2.13
52	Services to the elderly (e.g. senior centers, housing)	2.13
53	Teen pregnancy/sexuality	2.12
54	Wage and benefit levels	2.10
55	Sex education	2.10
56	Personnel policies	2.09
57	Adequate water treatment facilities	2.09
58	Local library needs	2.07
59	Development guidelines (planning and land use)	2.04
60	Street maintenance	2.04
61	Availability of low-income housing	2.04
62	Decline of public infrastructure in general	2.03
63	Reform in administration of property tax and assessment	2.02
64	Space needs	2.02
65	Day care facilities	2.01
66	Drug and alcohol treatment centers	2.01
67	Sewer rates	2.00
68	Traffic congestion	1.98
69	Prevention of crimes	1.98
70	Need for land use control mechanisms (non-zoning)	1.97
71	User charges and fees	1.96
72	Worker training or retraining (economic development)	1.94
73	Preservation of open space/natural beauty/landmarks	1.93
74	Adequate solid waste facilities	1.93
75	Use of land use control mechanisms (non-zoning)	1.89
76	Violence in schools	1.89
77	Welfare (TANF)	1.87
78	Relations between locality and other levels of government	1.86
79	Property taxes	1.86
80	Building inspections	1.86
81	Apprehension of offenders	1.86
82	Water rates	1.85
83	Service fees	1.81
84	Relations between local government officials	1.79
85	Adequacy of existing policing services	1.78
86	Pay classification systems	1.76
87	Property crimes	1.76
88	Intergovernmental grants-in-aid acquisition (for transportation)	1.75
89	Absence of zoning regulations	1.72
90	Regionalization of Public Service Districts	1.71
91	Relative cost of administration/services compared to similar localities	1.69
92	Bridge maintenance	1.68
93	Water pollution	1.67
94	EMS/ambulance service	1.67
95	Areas of shared emergency response	1.66
96	Coping with plant closures and layoffs	1.63

Rank	Issue (ranked on a 0-to-4 scale)	Mean
97	Traffic safety	1.62
98	Risk management	1.61
99	Conflict with other local govts. over development and public service coordination	1.61
100	Developing capital improvement budgets	1.60
101	Evaluating financial condition	1.60
102	Business taxes (B&O taxes)	1.60
103	Financial management of water or sewer board	1.60
104	Public transit	1.60
105	Responsiveness of emergency personnel	1.60
106	Workers' compensation insurance	1.59
107	Relations between locality and officials from other localities	1.58
108	Congestion control	1.57
109	Judging effectiveness of public services	1.56
110	Impacts of new development on public service costs	1.56
111	Use/development of 911 centers	1.56
112	Existence of zoning regulations	1.55
113	Garbage fees	1.55
114	Cooperation in service delivery among local governments in the area	1.53
115	Adequate garbage/trash collection service	1.51
116	Fire service	1.51
117	Cost accounting for programs and services	1.50
118	Auditing and performance evaluation	1.50
119	Management practices	1.48
120	Dealing with the location of development and sprawl issues	1.47
121	Termination of workers	1.45
122	Utility billing	1.45
123	Financial reporting practices/developing Comprehensive Annual Financial Reports	1.43
124	Purchasing	1.42
125	Homelessness	1.42
126	Dealing with rapid growth	1.41
127	Air pollution	1.41
128	Contracting	1.40
129	Developing annual operating budgets	1.40
130	Noise pollution	1.33
131	Safety administration	1.33
132	Financial accounting in accordance to Generally Accepted Accounting Principles	1.31
133	Snow removal	1.31
134	Contract administration	1.30
135	Hiring practices	1.29
136	Cash management	1.28
137	Freedom of information act requirements	1.27
138	Investment of funds	1.27
139	Cutback management	1.26
140	Government enterprises and pricing	1.25
141	Payment in lieu of taxes for federal land holdings	1.25
142	Hate crimes	1.22
143	Debt administration	1.20
144	Loss of farmland to development	1.16
145	Labor relations	1.12

List of Top 10 Concerns by PDC Region

RANK	PDC Region 1	PDC Region 2	PDC Region 3	PDC Region 4	PDC Region 5
1	Lack of ability to pay for insurance coverage (3.25)	Industrial park development (3.58)	Abandoned/ dilapidated housing (3.09)	Abandoned/ dilapidated housing (3.50)	Retaining and expanding existing businesses (3.47)
2	Recruitment of new manufacturing industry (3.18)	Funding sources for development (3.36)	Recreational opportunities (2.45)	Recruitment of new manufacturing industry (3.42)	Funding sources for development (3.44)
3	Recruitment of new retail businesses (3.06)	Retaining and expanding existing businesses (3.33)	Annexation-related issues (2.36)	Retaining and expanding existing businesses (3.33)	Recruitment of new retail businesses (3.29)
4	Lack of provided insurance coverage (3.06)	Recruitment of new retail businesses (3.25)	Personnel policies [administration] (2.27)	Recreational opportunities (3.27)	Recruitment of new manufacturing industry (3.28)
5	Funds for extracurricular activities (3.06)	Recruitment of new manufacturing industry (3.18)	Health insurance (2.27)	Recruitment of new retail businesses (3.25)	Street maintenance (2.78)
6	Industrial park development (3.00)	Local govt. role in economic development (3.08)	Cost of administration and services (2.27)	Main street/downtown revitalization (3.17)	Domestic violence (2.78)
7	Funding sources for development (3.00)	Garbage fees (2.95)	Funding sources for development (2.27)	Funding sources for development (3.17)	Recycling issues (2.67)
8	Need for state law changes for development costs (2.94)	Illegal dumping (2.91)	Renovation of existing housing (2.27)	Neighborhood community centers (3.09)	Animal control (2.67)
9	Retaining and expanding existing businesses (2.88)	Lack of ability to pay for insurance coverage (2.82)	Local library needs (2.27)	Neighborhood revitalization (3.08)	Dealing with lack of growth (2.65)
10	Repeat offenders (2.88)	Need for state law changes for development costs (2.75) Street maintenance (2.75) Recreational opportunities (2.75)	Recruitment of new manufacturing industry (2.18) Availability of low-cost housing (2.18) Absentee landlords (2.18)	Adequate waste water treatment facilities (3.08) Investment in upgrading property (3.08)	Need for state law changes for development costs (2.56)

List of Top 10 Concerns by PDC Region

RANK	PDC Region 6	PDC Region 7	PDC Region 8	PDC Region 9	PDC Region 10/11
1	Recruitment of new manufacturing industry (3.17)	Adequate sewer system (3.23)	Adequacy of the tax base (3.43)	Greater flexibility from the state (3.57)	Health insurance (3.75)
2	Abandoned/ dilapidated housing (3.17)	Abandoned/ dilapidated housing (3.23)	College preparation in education (3.29)	Traffic congestion (3.00)	Recruitment of new manufacturing industry (3.75)
3	Local govt. role in economic development (3.07)	Recruitment of new manufacturing industry (3.21)	Recruitment of new manufacturing industry (3.17)	Domestic violence (2.88)	Recruitment of new retail businesses (3.60)
4	Funding sources for development (3.04)	Funding sources for development (3.07)	Greater flexibility from the state (3.14)	Recruitment of new retail businesses (2.86)	Funding sources for development (3.60)
5	Retaining and expanding existing businesses (3.03)	Recruitment of new retail businesses (3.00)	Reform in admin of property tax/assessment (3.14)	Dealing with rapid growth (2.86)	Retaining and expanding existing businesses (3.50)
6	Recruitment of new retail businesses (3.00)	Retaining and expanding existing businesses (3.00)	Adequate garbage/trash collection service (3.14)	Prevention of crimes (2.75)	Federal intergovernmental grant revenues (3.43)
7	Main street/downtown revitalization (2.86)	Dealing with lack of growth (3.00)	Day care facilities (3.14)	Animal control (2.75)	State intergovernmental grant revenues (3.43)
8	Recreational opportunities (2.82)	Adequate waste water treatment facilities (3.00)	Funding sources for development (3.00)	Relations between locality/ state,federal officials (2.71)	Intergovernmental grants-in-aid acquisition (2.86)
9	Neighborhood revitalization (2.79)	Lack of ability to pay for insurance coverage (3.00)	Illegal dumping (3.00)	Building inspections (2.71)	Industrial park development (2.71)
10	Board of education and community relations (2.78) School consolidation (2.78)	Lack of flexibility and opinion in raising revenue (2.92) Investment in upgrading property (2.92) School consolidation (2.92)	Board of education and community relations (3.00) School consolidation (3.00)	Workforce preparation in education (2.71)	Need for state law changes for development costs (2.71) Domestic violence (2.71)

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